

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6, 11-15, and 18 are amended. Support for these amendments can be found, at least, on page 22, line 15 - page 23, line 18 of Applicants' specification. No new matter is added.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Robinson-Boyce in the July 1, 2010 telephone interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 for reciting non-statutory subject matter. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As agreed upon during the telephone interview, claims 1, 6 and 11, as amended, obviate the §101 rejections. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 6 and 11 and claims 2-5, 7-10 and 12-18 depending therefrom, under 35 U.S.C. §101.

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Office Action asserts that it is difficult to interpret what is actually being calculated and what values are used for calculation in the claims. The Office Action further asserts that it is difficult to understand how a computer is used in this application and the claims need to indicate what values are being input into the computer to come up with the result.

Independent claims 1, 6 and 11 recite several steps for carrying out the evaluation apparatus or method. Furthermore, Figs. 16A-C and pages 33-34 point out examples of the common word processing in conducting the evaluation method. As such, the claims and specification clearly indicate the necessary components and/or steps for carrying out the evaluation apparatus/method and clearly indicate what values are used for calculation.

For example, the specification explains that words are selected based on frequency of appearance in content information that is included in survey result information (corresponding to the recited "survey unit") for analysis. Sentences are parsed to collect and analyze the words (corresponding to the recited "evaluation unit") and the results are stored in an evaluation results database. See page 33, line 17 to page 34, line 7 of Applicant's specification. One of ordinary skill in the art would understand the parsing and analysis of words in sentences to be stored in a database would imply the use of a computer. Furthermore, claims 1, 6, and 11, as amended, clearly recite structural features indicating the use of a computer. Accordingly, for all the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 6 and 11, and claims 2-5, 7-10 and 12-18 depending therefrom, under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs.

Claims 1-7, 9-12 and 14-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2007/0226628 to Schlack ("Schlack") and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0103058 to Hamilton ("Hamilton"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 1, 6 and 11, as amended, recite an evaluation apparatus for evaluating activities of a plurality of groups where "the strength of the influence and extent of the influence are calculated, for each group, by ... examining as to whether or not a word representing a common concept in each group is included in the activity data or the concept of said another one of the groups by examining the words in the communications between group members and examining the words produced in the plural responses aggregated in the survey unit." Neither Hamilton nor Schlack disclose or suggest this feature.

Using the rejection of claim 1 for illustrative purposes, Schlack discloses a browser-enabled system of software and services that focuses on connecting people across spatial, temporal and organizational barriers to achieve specific objectives. See Abstract of

Schlack. Schlack discloses a virtual space, tools, activities and business processes that enable users to meet, dialogue, share documents and links, develop best practices, provide mutual aid and develop a sense of group identity. See paragraphs [0003] and [0014] of Schlack.

Schlack discloses the creation of a team and modification of the team's membership and other team parameters and options. See paragraph [0020] of Schlack. Schlack explains that typical activities inside each community might include dialogue, surveys, and gallery exhibits specific to the community and created either by the company or the individual members. See paragraph [0020] of Schlack. Schlack further explains that the company can also create activities that span the three communities (i.e., a poll that all members of all communities can engage in) with aggregated results. See paragraph [0020] of Schlack.

Schlack essentially allows users to enter a particular community (i.e., a form of user group) and provide contributions and information to achieve a certain goal. Although certain members will have different roles in this community and will affect the outcome of the community, Schlack does not analyze the particular communications (i.e., documents, emails) and look at the concepts of communications between the users by analyzing the various words in the communications between the users. Schlack is only providing an interface to allow users to share and communicate ideas to achieve the common goal, and those contributions are stored to facilitate future objectives that need to be solved by the particular group or community.

Hamilton does not cure Schlack's deficiencies. Hamilton discloses a decision analysis system having a decision group and a model base communicably connected to the decision group. See Abstract of Hamilton. Hamilton discloses a security management decision analysis system 100 that is a facilitator 102 and decision groups 110 that are used in combination of a multi-criteria decision analysis 120 and a Bayesian belief network (BBN) 122 to represent a network of decision criteria. See paragraph [0064] of Hamilton.

Hamilton discloses that an analytic network process ("ANP") 130 incorporates dependencies and feedbacks. See paragraph [0067] of Hamilton. The ANP 130 looks at the extent of influence of elements on particular elements with respect to a given quality. See paragraph [0067] of Hamilton.

Hamilton basically discloses a decision graph that weighs various nodes and factors between elements and then makes an appropriate decision based upon the particular weights and factors. Hamilton is not evaluating the relationship of community members to a particular group, nor is Hamilton analyzing the concepts in the communications between community members by examining the words in the particular communications.

By contrast, claim 1 recites an evaluation apparatus for evaluating activities of a plurality of groups where "the strength of the influence and the extent of the influence are calculated, for each group, by ... examining as to whether or not a word representing a common concept in each group is included in the activity data of the concept of said another one of the groups by examining the words in the communications between group members and examining the words produced in the plural responses aggregated in the survey unit."

Neither Schlack nor Hamilton disclose or suggest this feature of claim 1, nor do they disclose or suggest the above-mentioned features of claims 6 and 11. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 6 and 11, and claims 2-5, 7, 9-10, 12, and 14-18 depending therefrom, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claims 3, 8 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schlack and further in view of Hamilton and further in view of JP 2003-085347 Masamichi et al. ("Masamichi"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

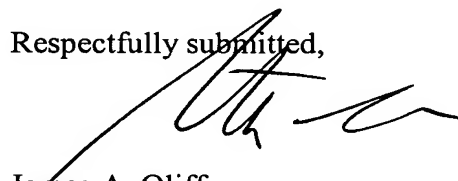
Claims 3, 8 and 13 depend from claims 1, 6 and 11, respectively. As explained above, neither Hamilton nor Schlack disclose or suggest the features recited in claims 1, 6 and 11, nor does Masamichi supply the subject matter lacking in either Schlack or Hamilton.

Therefore, claims 3, 8 and 13 are in condition for allowance based on their dependence from claims 1, 6 and 11, and for the separately patentable subject matter they recite. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3, 8 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:SQP/scg

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